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ABSTRACT

The Community Profiles Project uses data from the 1990 U.S. Census to describe some of the population characteristics of Asian Pacific Americans in selected Massachusetts cities and towns. The profiles include basic statistics relating to income, employment, education, and housing. This information can assist policy makers and practitioners in developing programs and policies affecting Asian Pacific Americans that are appropriate, sensitive, and effective. This profile focuses on Somerville. The 2,773 Asian Pacific Americans recorded as living in Somerville by the 1990 Census represented 4% of the city's total population. Chinese were the largest ethnic group, at nearly 40% of the Asian Pacific Americans. English language proficiency was highest in the 18 to 64 age group, and limited in the age group over 65. Household incomes of Asian Pacific Americans in Somerville reflected wide disparities, with the proportion of Asian Pacific Americans in the lowest income categories higher than that of Whites and the total population, and the proportion of Asian Pacific Americans in the highest income categories comparable to that of Whites and the total population. The per capita income of Asian Pacific Americans in Somerville was less than that of Whites and Blacks and more than that of Latinos. Unemployment rates for Asian Pacific American males and females were lower than for most groups, and labor force participation rates were comparable. More than 40% of the city's Asian Pacific Americans were enrolled in school, but a substantially lower percentage of Asian Pacific Americans aged over 25 had at least a ninth-grade education than in the population as a whole. While a much smaller proportion of Asian Pacific Americans were high school graduates when compared with other groups, Asian Pacific Americans had the largest proportion of individuals with undergraduate and graduate college degrees of any group and the total population. These data reflect the diversity of the Asian Pacific American population of Somerville. (Contains eight tables and nine figures.) (SLD)

Asian Pacific Americans in Somerville.
Community Profiles in Massachusetts

Institute for Asian American Studies · UMass Boston

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COMMUNITY PROFILES IN MASSACHUSETTS

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS *in Somerville*

INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES • UMASS BOSTON • BOSTON, MA 02125

The Community Profiles Project utilizes data drawn from the 1990 U.S. Census to describe some of the population characteristics of Asian Pacific Americans in selected Massachusetts cities and towns. The profiles include basic statistics relating to income, employment, education, and housing.This information can assist policymakers and practitioners in developing programs and constructing policies affecting Asian Pacific Americans that are appropriate, sensitive, and effective.

The Institute for Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston brings together resources and expertise from both the campus and community to conduct research on Asian Pacific American issues, to expand Asian American studies in the curriculum, and to support community development initiatives in Asian Pacific American communities in Massachusetts.

Project Staff: Project director: Paul Watanabe. Principal researchers: Carlton Sagara and Joanne Chow. Design and Production: Shauna Lo and Marilyn Wu.

Support provided by: The Boston Foundation.

CPB-1 96

I. Population Characteristics

Table 1. Population by Race*

White	67,568
Black	4,280
Asian Pacific American	2,773
Other	1,499
Native American	90
TOTAL	76,210

* Latinos may be of any race

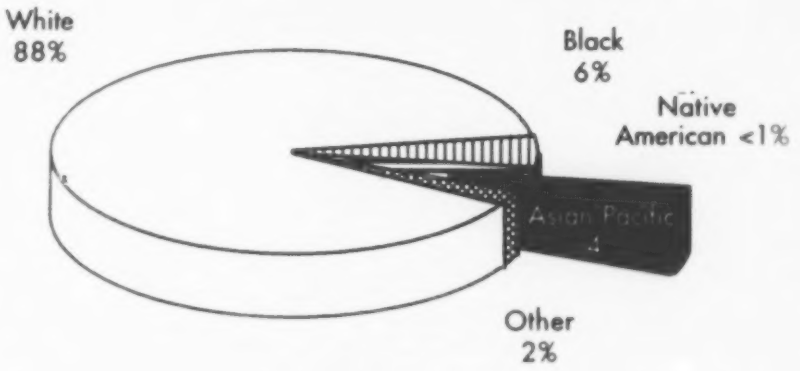


Figure 1

• The 2,773 Asian Pacific Americans recorded in the 1990 census as living in Somerville (Table 1) accounted for 4% of the city's residents (Figure 1). During the 1980s, the number of Asian Pacific Americans in Somerville increased by nearly four times.

• Chinese accounted for nearly 40% of the Asian Pacific American population (Table 2). Asian Indians, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Koreans were also well represented in Somerville.

• The Asian Pacific American population was very young (Figure 2). Males outnumbered females by a small margin (Figure 2).

• English language proficiency reflected some interesting differences in various age groups (Figure 3). The proficiency level was highest in the 18 to 64 age group. The 65 and over group had limited proficiency.

Table 2. Ancestry of Asian Pacific Americans

Chinese	1,076	38.8%
Asian Indian	449	16.2%
Japanese	307	11.1%
Vietnamese	339	12.2%
Korean	277	10.0%
Other Asian	194	7.0%
Filipino	81	2.9%
Hawaiian	22	0.8%
Thai	21	0.8%
Guamanian	7	0.3%
Cambodian	0	0.0%
Laotian	0	0.0%
Samoan	0	0.0%
Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
TOTAL	2,773	100.0%

Figure 2. Asian Pacific Americans by Sex and Age

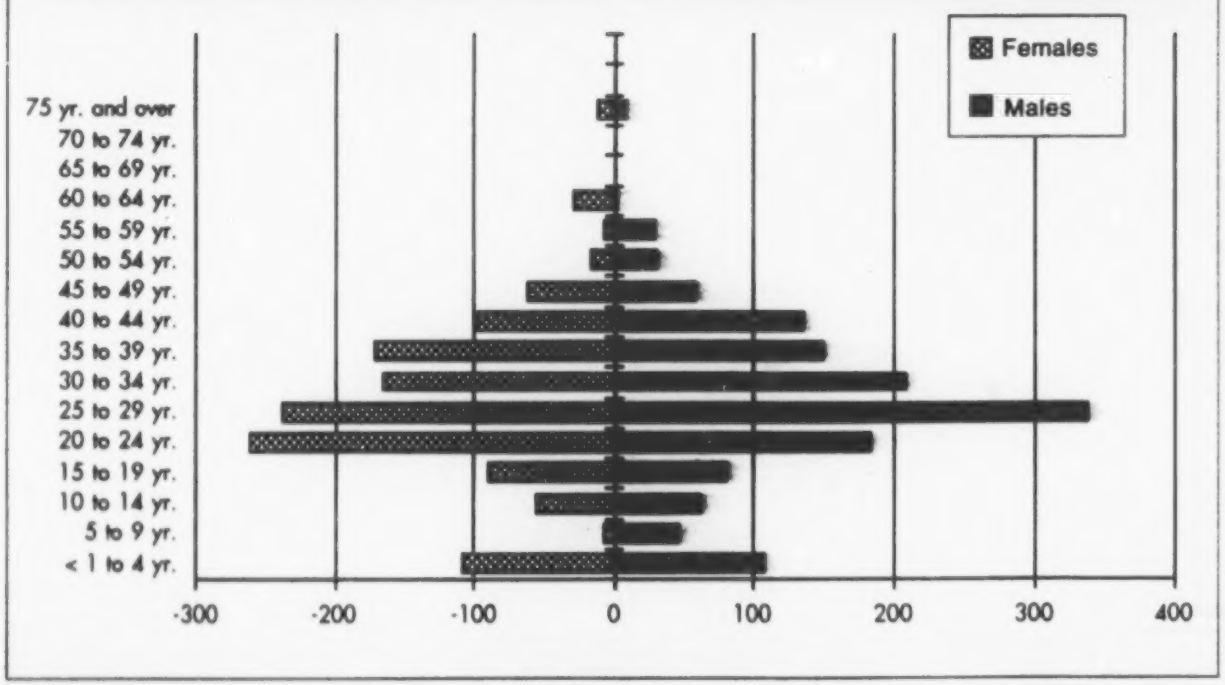
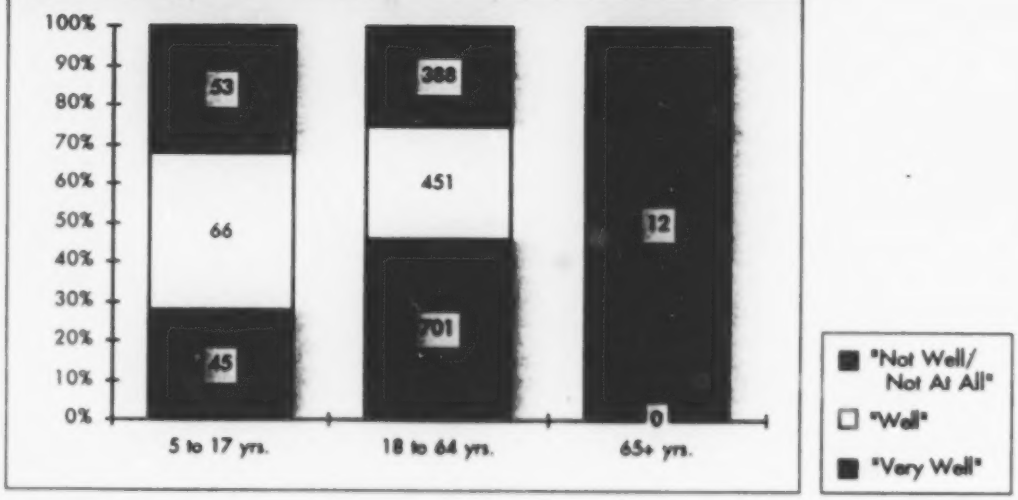


Figure 3. English Proficiency Among Asian Pacific Americans



II. Income

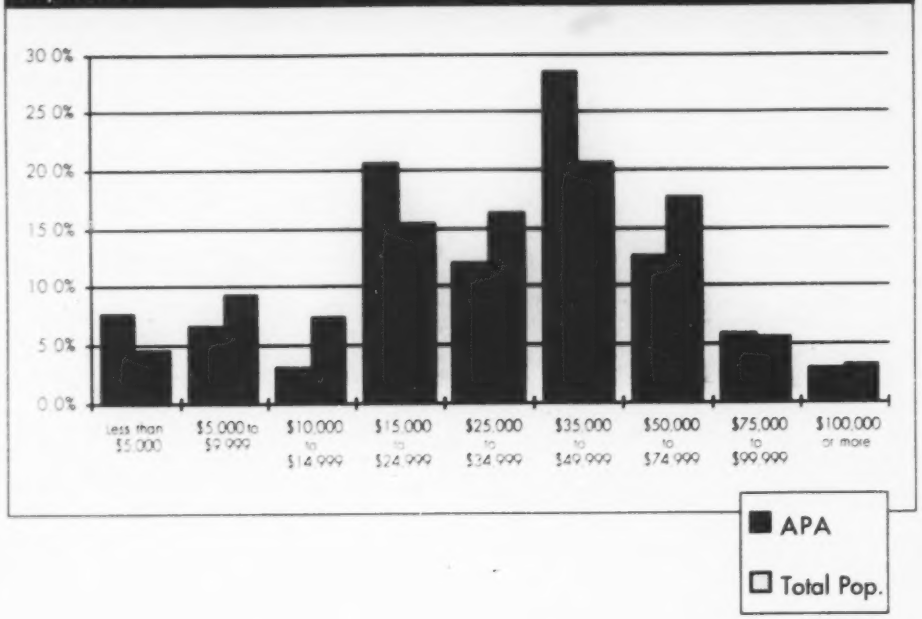
Table 3. Household Income by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Less than $5,000	67	1,204	84	8	40	96	1,403
	7.7%	4.4%	6.0%	25.8%	10.0%	6.5%	4.6%
$5,000 to $9,999	57	2,673	72	0	22	116	2,824
	6.6%	9.7%	5.1%	0.0%	5.5%	7.9%	9.3%
$10,000 to $14,999	27	2,060	135	0	0	59	2,222
	3.1%	7.5%	9.6%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	7.3%
$15,000 to $24,999	178	4,174	298	0	40	260	4,690
	20.6%	15.1%	21.1%	0.0%	10.0%	17.7%	15.5%
$25,000 to $34,999	104	4,477	270	23	71	257	4,945
	12.0%	16.2%	19.1%	74.2%	17.7%	17.5%	16.3%
$35,000 to $49,999	247	5,592	269	0	121	361	6,229
	28.6%	20.3%	19.1%	0.0%	30.1%	24.5%	20.5%
$50,000 to $74,999	109	4,944	197	0	100	286	5,350
	12.6%	17.9%	14.0%	0.0%	24.9%	19.4%	17.6%
$75,000 to $99,999	51	1,560	68	0	0	29	1,679
	5.9%	5.6%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	5.5%
$100,000 or more	25	927	17	0	8	8	977
	2.9%	3.4%	1.2%	0.0%	2.0%	0.5%	3.2%
TOTAL	865	27,611	1,410	31	402	1,472	30,319
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* Latinos may be of any race

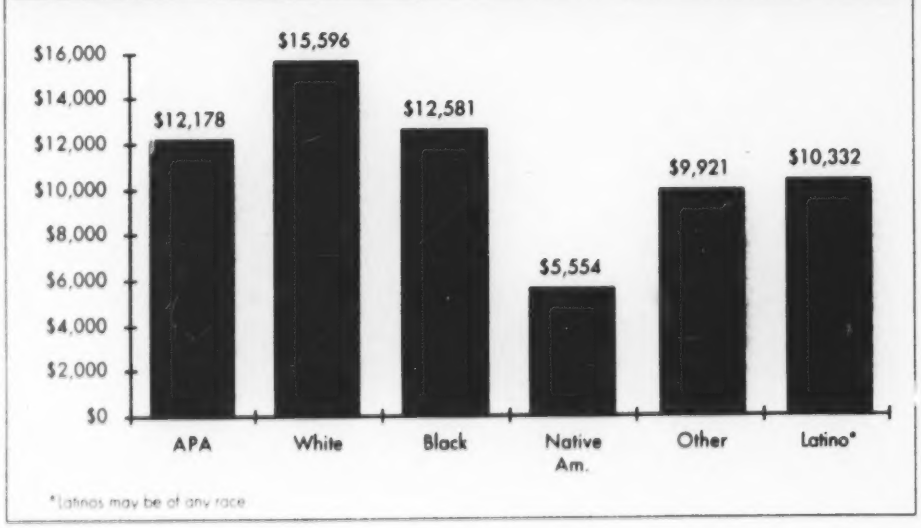
- Household incomes of Asian Pacific Americans reflected some wide disparities (Table 3 and Figure 4). For example, the proportion of Asian Pacific Americans in the lowest income category (those making less than $5,000) was larger than that of whites and the total population. The percentage of Asian Pacific Americans in the two highest categories (those making over $75,000) was comparable to that of whites and the total population.

Figure 4. Household Income for Asian Pacific Americans and Total Population



- The per capita income of Asian Pacific Americans was less than that of whites and Blacks and more than that of Latinos (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Per Capita Income by Race and Ethnicity



- Over 90% of Asian Pacific Americans in poverty were 18 to 64 years of age (Table 4).

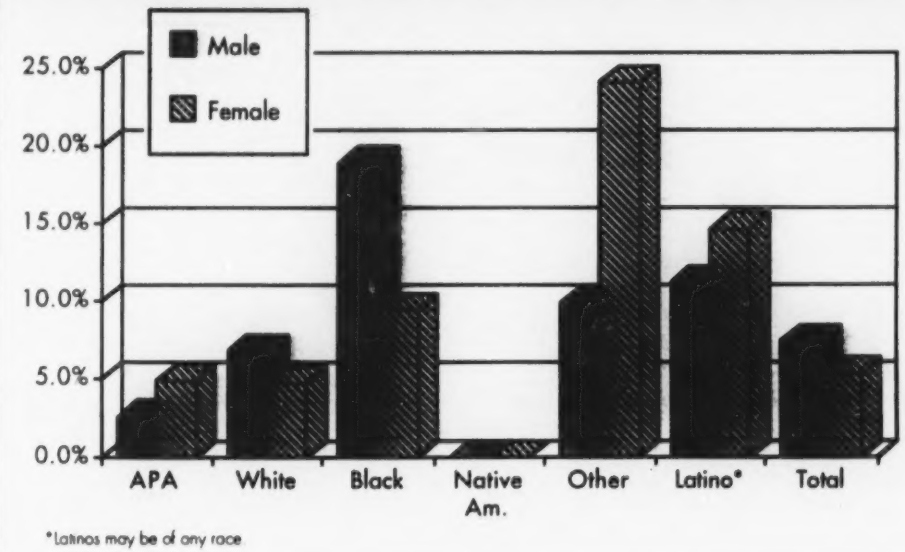
Table 4. Poverty Status by Age by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Under 5 years	21	381	70	0	10	43	482
	4.4%	5.4%	9.7%	0.0%	5.4%	6.0%	5.7%
5 years	5	87	18	0	2	2	112
	1.0%	1.2%	2.5%	0.0%	1.1%	0.3%	1.3%
6 to 11 years	15	546	27	4	12	41	604
	3.1%	7.7%	3.8%	23.5%	6.5%	5.7%	7.1%
12 to 17 years	5	426	125	5	0	86	561
	1.0%	6.0%	17.4%	29.4%	0.0%	11.9%	6.6%
18 to 64 years	431	4,709	466	8	141	517	5,755
	90.4%	66.4%	64.9%	47.1%	76.6%	71.8%	67.8%
65 to 74 years	0	460	12	0	0	7	472
	0.0%	6.5%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	5.6%
75 years and over	0	487	0	0	19	24	506
	0.0%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%	3.3%	6.0%
TOTAL	477	7,096	718	17	184	720	8,492
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Latinos may be of any race

III. Employment

Figure 6. Unemployment Rate By Sex, Race and Ethnicity



*Latinos may be of any race

• The unemployment rates of Asian Pacific American males and females were less than those for most groups and the total population (Figure 6 and Table 5).

• The labor force participation rates of Asian Pacific American males and females were comparable to those for whites and the total population (Table 5).

Table 5. Labor Force Attachment for Persons 16 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Males	1,218	27,402	1,564	27	685	2,045	30,896
In Armed Forces	0	68	0	0	0	0	68
Civilian: Employed	915	19,507	1,064	11	562	1,616	22,059
Civilian: Unemployed	24	1,418	248	0	61	204	1,751
Not in labor force	279	6,409	252	16	62	225	7,018
Male Unempl. Rate#	2.6%	6.8%	18.9%	0.0%	9.8%	11.2%	7.4%
Participation Rate@	77.1%	76.6%	83.9%	40.7%	90.9%	89.0%	77.2%
Females	1,148	31,412	1,856	35	484	1,670	34,935
In Armed Forces	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
Civilian: Employed	666	19,321	1,287	35	309	1,046	21,618
Civilian: Unemployed	34	940	134	0	98	179	1,206
Not in labor force	448	11,143	435	0	77	445	12,103
Female Unempl. Rate#	4.9%	4.6%	9.4%	0.0%	24.1%	14.6%	5.3%
Participation Rate@	61.0%	64.5%	76.6%	100.0%	84.1%	73.4%	65.3%

Unempl. Rate = (Civilian Unempl.)/(Civilian Empl. + Civilian Unempl.)

@ Participation Rate=(Civilian Employed+Civilian Unempl.)/(Civilian Empl.+Civilian Unempl.+Not in Labor Force)

*Latinos may be of any race

IV. Education

Table 6. School Enrollment of Persons 3 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
In Preprimary School	23	689	99	0	38	76	849
	0.9%	1.1%	2.4%	0.0%	2.8%	1.7%	1.2%
Elem. or High School	206	6,321	709	28	198	704	7,462
	7.9%	9.7%	17.3%	31.1%	14.4%	15.9%	10.1%
Enrolled in College	853	9,259	720	12	147	554	10,991
	32.8%	14.1%	17.6%	13.3%	10.7%	12.5%	14.9%
Not Enrolled in School	1,521	49,216	2,571	50	991	3,082	54,349
	58.4%	75.2%	62.7%	55.6%	72.1%	69.8%	73.8%
TOTAL	2,603	65,485	4,099	90	1,374	4,416	73,651
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Latinos may be of any race.

Figure 7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older for Asian Pacific Americans and Total Population

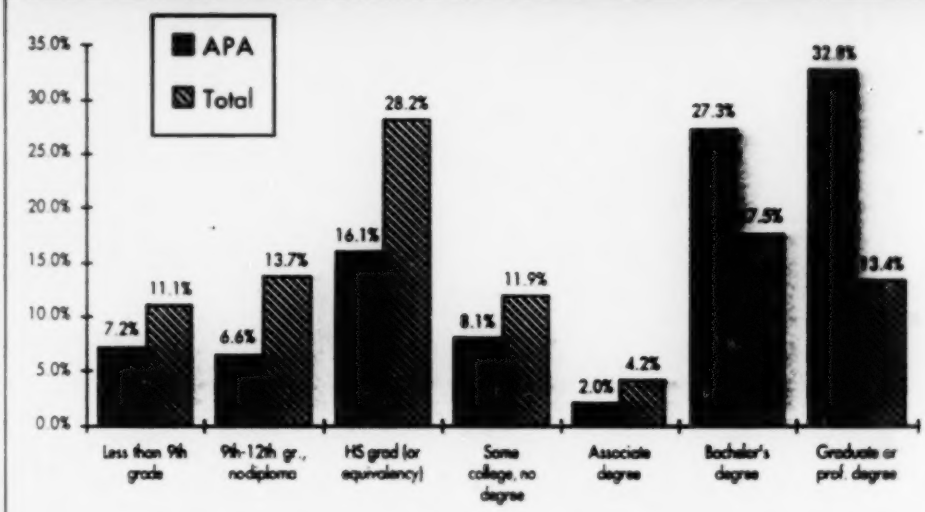


Table 7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Less than 9th grade	127	5,037	351	12	212	787	5,739
	7.2%	10.8%	13.8%	19.4%	25.2%	29.8%	11.1%
9th-12th gr., no diploma	116	6,538	278	8	172	381	7,112
	6.6%	14.0%	11.0%	12.9%	20.4%	14.4%	13.7%
HS grad (or equivalency)	284	13,484	688	25	136	620	14,617
	16.1%	29.0%	27.1%	40.3%	16.2%	23.5%	28.2%
Some college, no degree	143	5,469	426	12	99	293	6,149
	8.1%	11.7%	16.8%	19.4%	11.8%	11.1%	11.9%
Associate degree	36	1,866	205	5	56	126	2,168
	2.0%	4.0%	8.1%	8.1%	6.7%	4.8%	4.2%
Bachelor's degree	483	8,165	323	0	89	251	9,060
	27.3%	17.5%	12.7%	0.0%	10.6%	9.5%	17.5%
Graduate or prof. degree	580	6,006	267	0	78	185	6,931
	32.8%	12.9%	10.5%	0.0%	9.3%	7.0%	13.4%
TOTAL	1,769	46,565	2,538	62	842	2,643	51,776
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Latinos may be of any race

- More than 40% of all Asian Pacific Americans were enrolled in school (Table 6).

- The educational attainments of Asian Pacific Americans over 25 years old departed dramatically from those of whites and the total population at several levels (Table 7 and Figure 7). A substantially lower percentage of Asian Pacific Americans had less than a 9th grade education compared with other groups and the total population. A much smaller proportion of Asian Pacific Americans were high school graduates compared with other groups and the total population. Asian Pacific Americans had the largest proportion of individuals with undergraduate and graduate college degrees of any group and the total population.

V. Housing

- The owner-occupancy rate for Asian Pacific Americans was considerably less than that of whites and the total population (Figure 8).

- Of Asian Pacific Americans who paid rents over 90% paid more than $499 (Table 8 and Figure 9).

Figure 8. Rental and Owner Occupancy By Race and Ethnicity

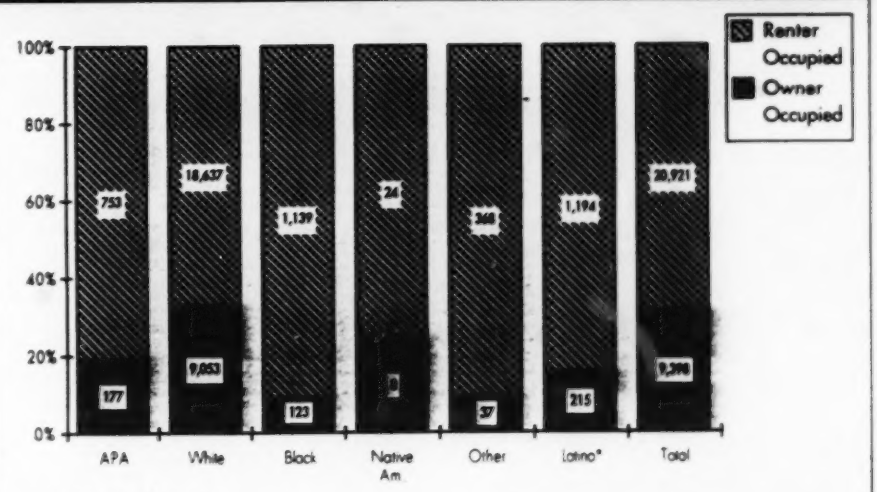


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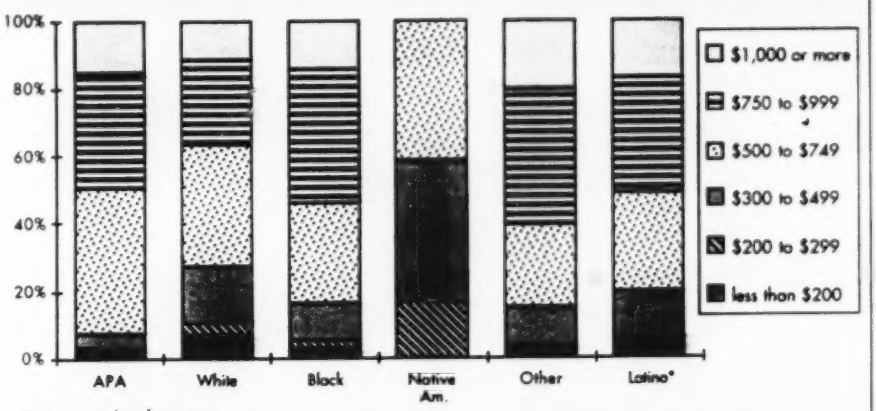
Figure 9. Gross Rent By Race and Ethnicity



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LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

The 1990 U.S. Census data allows for the examination of the situation of Asian Pacific Americans and provides the most comprehensive available information on this group. The data, however, does have some limitations. Linguistic, cultural, and other barriers contributed to an undercounting of Asian Pacific Americans in the 1990 Census. Furthermore, by aggregating Asian Pacific Americans together, differences between nationalities were often muted. Errors in coding also limited the reliability of some data on Asian Pacific Americans.

Table 8. Gross Rent by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*
less than $200	13	1,281	28	0	13	70
$200 to $299	10	688	27	4	0	3
$300 to $499	33	3,027	129	10	42	159
$500 to $749	322	6,643	339	10	90	348
$750 to $999	258	4,583	453	0	148	409
$1,000 or more	117	2,155	163	0	75	205
No cash rent	0	260	0	0	0	0

*Latinos may be of any race.